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WASHINGTON

The CIA has had regulations since 1977 that bar the intelligence agency from using American journalists for intelligence-gathering operations, an agency spokeswoman said today.

A CIA spokeswoman Sharon Foster said the regulations do not forbid the CIA from accepting information from American journalists.

"It's not a total exclusion," she said. "We don't say you can't talk to us and we can't talk to you."

The regulations were announced Dec. 2, 1977, and bar the CIA from taking part "in any relationships with full-time or part-time journalists accredited by a U.S. news service, newspaper, periodical, radio and television network or station, for the purpose of conducting any intelligence activities," Foster said.

She said Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, said at the time that he would propose legislation prohibiting the use of journalists for intelligence work.

The Congress "never prescribed against it, so the agency set its own internal regulations," Foster said.

She said the regulations "flowed from the Watergate era when the agency was under so much scrutiny."

The CIA is permitted to use journalists working for foreign publications and broadcast outlets in its overseas intelligence gathering, Foster said.

The government newspaper Izvestia said Monday Danilooff was guilty of a string of spying acts besides the one that led to his arrest.

Izvestia, apparently quoting from records from the KGB investigation, gave the details of the meeting with a Soviet source that led to Danilooff's detention Aug. 30 and charged the reporter was involved with a U.S. diplomat expelled for alleged spying.

Danilooff, when working for United Press International, was among American reporters who publically said U.S. intelligence agencies should be forbidden to use journalists as cover for intelligence activities. He was equally insistent that no law be enacted preventing reporters from talking to or gathering information from intelligence agencies.

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On May 3, 1978, Danilooff was one of three reporters who appeared before the Senate Intelligence Committee to discuss media relations with intelligence.

The others were Daniel Schorr, former CBS News reporter, and Jack Nelson, Washington bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times.

Danilooff said he approached legislation relating to journalists "with considerable trepidation."

Danilooff said he favored putting the media off limits to American intelligence for intelligence work or as cover but did not agree with the prospect of putting the CIA, FBI or other agencies out of bounds to reporters.

"There are two categories of activities which, I believe, are permissible," he said, "public information exchange" and "extraordinary service."

"It is typical of journalists that they believe they may talk to whomever they wish, whenever they wish, and about whatever they wish," he said.

As to "extraordinary service," Danilooff said in past crises reporters occasionally "played the role of intermediary, passing on messages from one hostile side to the other. ... I see no reason why the United States should deprive itself of this type of conduit in times of crisis."